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**Subject:** Organ Mountains NM Initial Data Request Exec Summary, Data Summary, New Information Request Responses  
**Date:** Wednesday, June 07, 2017 6:30:11 AM  
**Attachments:** [Organ Mountains Data Summary6 5 2017.docx](#)  
[Organ Mountains Executive Summary 6 5 2017.docx](#)  
[Organ Mountains New Additional Information 6 5 2017.docx](#)

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Hi Randy,

We have completed our review of the initial responses provided in response to the April 26, 2017 Executive Order 13792 and initial data request for the Organ Mountains National Monument. Please find attached an executive summary and data summary. These two summary documents along with the requested data and supporting sources of information have been uploaded to the respective Google Drive folder for the Organ Mountains National Monument.

Per your request, I have also attached the responses to the new, additional information requested in a word document. ("Organ Mountains\_New Information Request\_6\_2\_2017")

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## Call for Data Related to Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)

### Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

#### 1. Documents Requested

##### a. Resource Management Plans/Land Use Plans

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) has not yet initiated a Resource Management Plan (RMP). The 1993 Mimbres RMP will be followed in the interim. The Mimbres RMP can be accessed here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72801/97036/117193/LCDO\\_-\\_1993\\_-\\_Mimbres\\_Resource\\_Area\\_RMP.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72801/97036/117193/LCDO_-_1993_-_Mimbres_Resource_Area_RMP.pdf).

##### b. Record of Decision

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) has not yet initiated a Resource Management Plan (RMP). The 1993 Mimbres RMP will be followed in the interim. The Mimbres RMP can be accessed here:

[https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72801/97036/117193/LCDO\\_-\\_1993\\_-\\_Mimbres\\_Resource\\_Area\\_RMP.pdf](https://eplanning.blm.gov/epl-front-office/projects/lup/72801/97036/117193/LCDO_-_1993_-_Mimbres_Resource_Area_RMP.pdf).

##### c. Public Scoping Documents

Public Scoping has not yet been initiated for the OMDPNM.

##### d. Presidential Proclamation

The May 21, 2014 Presidential Proclamation 9131 (1.d. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Presidential Proclamation.pdf).

#### 2. Information on activities permitted at the Monument, including annual levels of activity from the **date of designation to the present**

##### a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has diverse recreational opportunities and attracts a wide spectrum of recreational enthusiasts. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) has four separate units: the Organ Mountains, the Dona Ana Mountains, the Robledo and Las Uvas Mountains, and the Petrillo Mountains. The Organ Mountains has the most developed recreation sites

including Recreation Fee areas, but also has many opportunities for dispersed recreational use and self exploration. The other three units have more undeveloped, backcountry recreation, except in the Dona Ana Mountains where there is a very popular mountain bike trail system beloved by the local mountain bike community. Some of the recreational opportunities in the Monument include but are not limited to hiking, hunting, mountain biking, OHV use, mountain climbing, bouldering, and sightseeing.

Due to the dispersed recreational use across most of the Monument, it is a challenge to collect visitation statistics. In 2017, BLM installed a series of both pedestrian and vehicle counters in key locations to get better baseline visitor use information. This data is not yet available.

In the Organ Mountains unit, there are three National Recreation Areas: Soledad Canyon Day Use Area, Aguirre Spring Campground, and Dripping Springs Natural Area and all three have the most reliable visitor counts from vehicle counters installed at these locations. Although this does not capture the other dispersed recreational visits outside of these three areas the following is a combination of visitation of these three sites since monument designation as reported in the Recreation Management Information System (RMIS):

- FY 2014- 67,378
- FY 2015 - 84,377
- FY 2016 - 170,451

See attached 2.a. OMDP Visitation Stats FY2009-2016.xlsx

The jump in recreation visits in 2016 is due to a huge increase visits to both Dripping Springs Natural Area and Soledad Canyon Day Use Area. The National Monument received national media attention in 2015 and is the best explanation for doubling of visitation as a new designated monument within the National Conservation Lands System.

- b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site; amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)
  - i. There has been no production of coal, oil and gas, and renewable minerals in

OMDPNM. There are no leases for any of the above mineral uses within the Monument.

ii. Since the designation of the OMDPNM, there has been no new construction of energy transmission infrastructure. There has been road maintenance activity related to energy transmission service roads.

iii. There are 31 existing transmission and distribution power lines within and/or intersecting the OMDPNM. Most of these were constructed between the early 1960s to mid-1980s.

iv. There has been activity on the following concerning energy transmission infrastructure:

- Prior to the OMDPNM designation, one energy transmission rights-of-way (ROW) request was proposed and a grant issued after the OMDPNM designation. This ROW lies within the section 368 energy designated corridor, (West-Wide Energy Corridors enacted August 8, 2005). Construction for this infrastructure has not yet began.
- There has been one additional energy transmission request to upgrade facilities and increase the ROW width of an existing line within the monument.
- Other activities likely to occur from the date of the OMDPNM designation to present are routine maintenance requests from energy companies to maintain existing service roads.

c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site

There are no mining claims within OMDPNM. There is a Common Use Area (CUA) for mineral materials; however, no sales or production has occurred in the CUA since the designation of OMDPNM. There are no mineral developments or process facilities adjacent to or impacted by the National Monument designation.

d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)

There is no active timber production within the OMDPNM. The desert ecosystem does not lend itself to this type of activity.

e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)

There are 38 allotments wholly or partially contained within OMDPNM. These allotments include 86,271 permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs). Allotment

boundaries do not coincide with the OMDPNM boundary, and therefore it is not possible to precisely calculate the number of AUMs currently permitted within the monument boundary. In Grazing Year 2016, 49,861 AUMs were billed (see attachment 2(e) OMDPNM\_Billed\_AUMs\_by\_Allotment\_2012-2016). The billed AUMs is lower than permitted AUMs due to a combination of non-use and not stocking to full capacity. This was done by the permittees due to lack of forage and available water.

- f. Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available
  - i. Subsistence activities are those that provide bare essentials for living: food, water and shelter. The Federal Subsistence Management Program provides opportunities for subsistence way of life in Alaska on federal public lands and waters. There are no formal subsistence programs outside of Alaska.
  - ii. Although the BLM manages the land in OMDPNM for the habitat of the wildlife, the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMG&F) manages the game. The BLM has not put any restrictions on hunting within the Monument.
  - iii. Since the OMDPNM was designated, an average of 2,590 hunting licenses have been issued by NMG&F annually on public lands in game management units overlapping with the OMDPNM. Types of hunting include 450 elk hunting licenses on public lands and on average 108 turkey hunters annually. Other wildlife present are also hunted and trapped in the area, but data is not available by game management unit. Deer licenses issued pre-designation have remain the same, while elk and turkey hunting rates increased after designation (see 3.f.iii. for comparison).
  - iv. The BLM Las Cruces District Office issues between 30 to 40 Special Recreation Permits for Hunters and Guides Commercial Services within OMDPNM annually. The number of permits issued have been consistent since designation and the five years prior.
- g. Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available

The Organ Mountains – Desert Peaks National Monument contains examples of human history throughout time. There are 344 recorded sites within the monument boundaries. These include Paleoindian, Archaic, Formative, Protohistoric, and Historic period sites. The vast majority of these sites were

recorded in the 1970s and early 1980s. These records are extremely poor and, for the prehistoric sites, include no more information than “Lithic” or “Lithic and Ceramic.” Temporal periods for most of these is not known.

In addition to the recorded archaeological sites, seven abandoned ranches, nine Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) features (dams and erosion control structures), eleven rock walls and cairns, and one heliograph site have been recorded within the Monument boundary.

There are eight World War II era bombing targets created within the Las Uvas, Robledo, and Potrillos Mountains portions of the National Monument. Near the north end of Las Uvas is one of the aerial bombing targets used by trainees at Deming Army AirField during World War II. This particular target is a life-sized outline of a battleship created on the landscape and trainees bombed in preparation for active duty in the war.

Among the known archaeological sites are two Paleoindian sites (pre 8,000 BCE) at the south end of the Robledo Mountains. There are innumerable Archaic Period sites across the Monument. There is also a very large (20 acres) lithic site that is associated with several petroglyph sites from the Middle Archaic Period (3000 to 1800 BCE) in the southern Las Uvas Mountains.

Near the south end of the Organ Mountains there is a complex of rock shelters dating to the Middle Archaic Period through the Formative Period (400 to 1450 CE). Associated with these rock shelters is a use area that covers a minimum of 160 acres. At one of these rock shelters the excavators found corn that was, for a time, the earliest corn in the United States (approximately 4000 years old).

The Butterfield Overland Mail Route passes through the south end of the Robledo Mountains. This mail route operated from September 15, 1858 until March 1, 1861 and ran from north Texas to San Francisco, California. There is a stage stop and a homestead that also served as a stage stop, within the National Monument.

At Picacho Mountain (also in the Robledo Range) there is an atalaya (lookout) dating to the late Spanish colonial period. This site was discovered by Adolf Bandelier in the late 1800s.

Well known in the region and, now becoming known nationally, is the historic complex at Dripping Springs in the Organ Mountains. Dripping Springs was the location of The Van Patten Mountain Camp and Boyd Sanitarium. Eugene Van Patten married a Piro Indian woman from Tortugas (an unrecognized pueblo in Las Cruces) and settled in the Dripping Springs canyon in the late 1800s. He hired Tortugas men and women to build his home and a hotel there. He also had a series of dams built to contain and direct the flow of water to various places on his property.

3. Information on activities occurring during the **5 years prior to designation**

a. Recreation - annual visits to site

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks has diverse recreational opportunities and attracts a wide spectrum of recreational enthusiasts. OMDPNM has four separate units: the Organ Mountains, the Dona Ana Mountains, the Robledo and Las Uvas Mountains, and the Petrillo Mountains. The Organ Mountains has the most developed recreation sites including Recreation Fee areas but also has many opportunities for dispersed recreational use. The other three units have more undeveloped, backcountry recreation, except in the Dona Ana Mountains where there is a very popular mountain bike trail system that is beloved by the local mountain bike community. Some of the recreational opportunities in the Monument include but are not limited to hiking, hunting, mountain biking, OHV use, mountain climbing, bouldering, sightseeing, and more.

In the Organ Mountains unit there are three National Recreation Trails, Soledad Canyon Day Use Area, Aguirre Spring Campground, and Dripping Springs Natural Area. The most reliable visitor counts come from vehicle counters that are at Dripping Springs, Aguirre Springs, and Soledad Canyon, though this does not capture the other dispersed recreational visits outside of these three areas. The following is a combination of visitation at these three sites for the five years prior to designation as reported in RMIS:

- FY 2009- 63,724
- FY 2010- 69,793
- FY 2011 - 66,484
- FY 2012- 72,431

- FY 2013 - 75,813

See attached 2.a. OMDP Visitation Stats FY2009-2016.xlsx

- b. Energy - annual production of coal, oil, gas and renewables (if any) on site;  
amount of energy transmission infrastructure on site (if any)
  - i. There was no energy production from coal, oil and gas, or renewables during the five years prior to the designation of OMDPNM. The majority of OMDPNM has prior designations closing the area to leasing that date back at least 20 years prior to the designation of OMDPNM.
  - ii. No energy transmission infrastructure was constructed within the OMDPNM during the 5 years prior to its designation.
  - iii. There are 31 existing transmission and distribution power lines within and/or intersecting the OMDPNM. Most of these were constructed between the early 1960s to mid-1980s.
- c. Minerals - annual mineral production on site  
The last known mineral production within OMDPNM was in 2008 (six-years prior to Monument designation) from a designated Common Use Area (CUA). CUAs are designated until the BLM decides that the CUA is no longer in the interest of the public.
- d. Timber - annual timber production on site (in board-feet, CCF, or similar measure)  
There is no active timber production within the OMDPNM. Our desert ecosystem does not lend itself to this type of activity.
- e. Grazing - annual grazing on site (AUMs permitted and sold)  
There are 38 allotments wholly or partially contained within OMDPNM. These allotments include 86,271 permitted Animal Unit Months (AUMs). Allotment boundaries do not coincide with the OMDPNM boundary, and therefore it is not possible to precisely calculate the number of AUMs currently permitted within the monument boundary (please see attachment 2(e)OMDPNM\_Billed\_AUMs\_by\_Allotment\_2012-2016).

AUMs billed/sold during the past five years are included below.



- 2016- 49,861 AUMs
- 2015- 68,666 AUMs
- 2014- 58,342 AUMs
- 2013- 41,108 AUMs
- 2012- 49,822 AUMs

- f. Subsistence - participation rates for subsistence activities occurring on site (fishing, hunting, gathering); quantities harvested; other quantifiable information where available
- i. Subsistence activities are those that provide bare essentials for living: food, water and shelter. The Federal Subsistence Management Program provides opportunities for subsistence way of life in Alaska on federal public lands and waters. There are no formal subsistence programs outside of Alaska.
  - ii. Although the BLM manages the land in OMDPNM for the habitat of the wildlife, the New Mexico Department of Game & Fish (NMG&F) manages the game. The BLM has not put any restrictions on hunting within the Monument.
  - iii. Prior to designation, only data from 2012-2013 is readily available. For these years, an average of 2,604 deer hunting licenses were issued annually on public lands in game management units that overlap with the OMDPNM, along with 350 elk hunting licenses on public lands. There were also been an average of 17 turkey hunters annually on all ownership types in the game management units overlapping the OMDPNM prior to designation. Other wildlife was hunted and trapped in the area, but no available information from NMG&F.
  - iv. The BLM Las Cruces District Office issues between 30 to 40 Special Recreation Permits for Hunters and Guides Commercial Services annually. The number of permits issued has been consistent since designation and the five years prior. These permits include the areas within OMDPNM.
- g. Cultural - list of cultural uses/values for site; number of sites; other quantifiable information where available

See answer to 1(g).

4. (b) (5)

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5. Changes to boundaries - dates and changes in size

There have been no changes to the OMDPNM boundaries.

6. Public Outreach prior to Designation - outreach activities conducted and opportunities for public comment

Many meetings were held prior to designation; these meetings were hosted by Congressional delegations, the Secretary's office, and community groups. BLM only participated in these meetings as subject matter experts and did not keep records of dates, attendees or content of these meetings.

For further information please see document attached (6.Public Input Prior to Designation) that a community group put together of all the local governments and community organizations' declaration of support of designation and press briefings of public meetings prior to designation.

7. Terms of Designation

Refer to the May 21, 2014 Presidential Proclamation 9131 (attached as 1.d. Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Presidential Proclamation.pdf).

## **Executive Summary of Review of National Monuments under EO 13792 (April 26, 2017)**

### **Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks, Las Cruces, New Mexico**

#### **Key Information about Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument**

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (496,330 acres) was established by Presidential Proclamation on May 21, 2014. Prior to designation, the area was managed by the BLM and continues to be following designation. The BLM manages for multiple uses within the Monument (hunting, fishing, recreation, grazing, and valid existing rights such as oil production, etc.), while protecting the vast array of historic and scientific resources identified in the Proclamation and providing opportunities for scientific study of those resources. The resources identified in the Proclamation include visual, cultural, geologic, paleontological, ecological, and scientific resources. Overall, multiple use activities are allowed in Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument that are compatible with the protection of resources and objects identified in the Presidential Proclamation. Multiple use activities are subject to decisions made in current and future BLM resource management planning efforts, which include public participation. National Monuments and other conservation areas managed by the BLM continue to allow for multiple uses according to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.

#### **Summary of Public Engagement Prior to Designation**

Meetings hosted by Congressional delegations, the Secretary's office, and community groups, were held prior to designation. BLM participated in these meetings as subject matter experts and did not keep records of dates, attendees or content of these meetings.

For further information about the amount of meetings and community support of the designation, please attached document: '6. Public Input Prior to Designation'. This is a compilation of local governments' and community organizations' declaration of support of designation, and press briefings of public meetings prior to designation.

#### **Summary of Public Scoping in Development of Resource Management Plan**

Public Scoping has not yet been initiated for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM).

#### **Summary of National Monument Activities since Designation**

Management of Recreation, livestock grazing, and cultural resources has continued within the OMDPNM. The Monument has no production of coal, oil, gas, and renewable minerals. There are no mining claims other than a Common Use Area for mineral materials, which has not had any sale or production since the designation of the monument. The Monument does not lend itself to any timber activity due to its desert ecosystem.

### **Summary of Activities in Area for Five years Preceding Pre-Designation**

Much of the management of the Monument remains the same when comparing the years proceeding designation and the years after designation. The major change is in the sharp increase in visitation and the additional staff hired to support and manage the increased levels of visitation.

### **Summary of Available Economic Information since Designation**

Recreation use and visitation has increased since the designation of the OMDPNM resulting in economic benefits for the surrounding community of Las Cruces and is supported within the BLM recreation fee areas. The BLM continues to receive payment for livestock grazing on federal lands and the sale of livestock occurs within the state. Range allotment management has not changed as a result of the Monument designation.

For a report about the economic effects of the Monument designation, please see the attached National Conservation Lands' Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Economic Snapshot. It estimates total economic output support at \$24,359,990 in 2016 (attachment: Organ Mountains Desert Peaks NM Economic Snapshot.PDF). Las Cruces Green Chamber of Commerce also conducted an economic impact study post designation and it found the economic benefits increased for both local economies and state and local tax revenue (attachment: Organ-Mountains-Desert-Peaks-economic-impact-study-8-16). A business poll also found local businesses were optimistic about the positive effects the Monument was having on their businesses (see attachment: OMDP Business Impact Memo). Population size and jobs increased by 21% and 27%, respectively, between 2001 and 2015, following an overarching trend of increasing economies near protected public lands (see attachment: Organ Mountains Desert Peaks NM: A Summary of the Economic Performances of Surrounding Communities).

### **Summary of Any Boundary Adjustments since Designation**

There has not been any boundary adjustments since the May 21, 2014 Presidential Proclamation designation of the OMDPNM.

**New Information Requested on Executive Order on the Review  
of Designations Under the Antiquities Act**

**BLM Responses to Additional Questions for Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument**

- a) Any legislative language, including legislation in appropriations bills

**Previous legislative proposals:**

Several legislative proposals have been introduced into the House and/or Senate to establish a National Conservation Area in areas covered by the current Monument designation.

**There is one current legislation introduced in the Senate this year that is listed below:**

**Summary: S.441 — 115th Congress (2017-2018) [All Bill Information](#)**

There is one summary for S.441. [Bill summaries](#) are authored by [CRS](#).

**Introduced in Senate (02/17/2017)**

**Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Conservation Act**

This bill designates specified lands in New Mexico administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of the Department of the Interior as wilderness and as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Such wilderness areas shall also be administered as components of the National Landscape Conservation System.

The bill designates approximately 100 acres of specified BLM land in New Mexico as a potential wilderness area, upon which Interior shall permit only those uses already permitted. When specified conditions have been met, this area shall be incorporated into the Robledo Mountains Wilderness.

The bill releases from further review for designation as wilderness the public land in Dona Ana County, New Mexico, administered by the BLM and not designated as wilderness. The bill withdraws the Potrillo Mountains Complex from the Potrillo Mountains Wilderness and closes a specified route from public access, making it available only for administrative and law enforcement uses, including border security.

In implementing a management plan for the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument in New Mexico, Interior shall include a watershed health assessment to identify opportunities for watershed restoration.

Any land or interest that is within specified state trust land acquired by the United States shall become part of the monument.

Interior shall convey to the state of New Mexico specified BLM land in exchange for specified parcels of state trust land within the monument.

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- c) Designated wilderness areas (name, acreage), wilderness study areas (name if there is one, acreage, type), and/or areas managed to preserve wilderness or roadless characteristics that are not wsa's.

**i. Wilderness Study Areas:** There are seven Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) within the monument boundaries. Below is a table listing acres and whether the review is a 603 or 202. This is referring to whether the WSA was identified by wilderness review required by Section 603 of the Federal Land Management Act (FLPMA) and established by Congress; or whether it was identified during the land use planning process under the authority of Section 202 of FLPMA.



WSA Name	Entire Acreage of WSA	Acreage within the Monument	603 or 202
Organ Mountains	7,304	7,302	603
Las Uvas Mountains	11,201	11,199	603
Aden Lava Flow	25,926	25,910	603
Robledo Mountains	12,925	12,145	603
West Potrillo Mountains	141,646	120,700	603
Pena Blanca	4,328	4,328	202
Organ Needles	5,930	5,925	202

**ii. National Natural Landmark:** Kilbourne Hole National Natural Landmark was designated in 1975. Kilbourne Hole is an example of an uncommon volcanic feature known as a maar. A maar is a depression caused by a volcanic explosion that emits little volcanic material except gas.

**iii. Lands With Wilderness Characteristics:** To this date, there has not been any additional areas within the Monument identified as possessing wilderness characteristics and chosen to manage for those characteristics.

d) Outstanding R.S. 2477 claims within a monument – type of road claimed and history

There have not been any RS2477 Claims that have been adjudicated within New Mexico BLM Lands. Below is the list of claims within the boundaries of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks.

There are 43 identified county roads within the boundary of Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM). All of these are within Dona Ana County, New Mexico. Most of these roads are improved dirt roads the county claimed as existing roads through submission of an inventory list and were assigned 1 serial number for all.

Monument Unit	# of RS 2477s
Dona Anas	1
Organs	6
Robledo/Uvas	30
Potrillos	6
Total	43

e) Maps

Please see attached map: Additional Information (e) OMDP NM Map.

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